

Newtown Square, PA – The Knights of Columbus Mater Dei Council No. 4129 gathered tonight for both celebration and solemnity at their Annual Dinner Dance in Newtown Square. The festive occasion was punctuated by the presentation of a check for \$1,500 from the Knights of Columbus to Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-7), who attended the event, on behalf of Lieutenant Council (LTC) Mark Patrick Phelan Foundation.

— The Foundation was established in memory of Lieutenant Colonel Phelan, who was killed in Iraq in 2004. The Foundation honors his desire to support enlisted soldiers by providing financial support to aid wounded veterans and the spouses and children of soldiers killed in action.

“It is both fitting and commendable that a faith-based fraternal organization committed to providing financial assistance and moral support to the most needy in our society would take the time to raise funds for the LTC Mark Patrick Phelan Foundation,” Congressman Sestak said. “As the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan continue, and as men and women continue to return with devastating injuries, it is gratifying to know that there are compassionate and supportive organizations waiting to welcome them home. And for the families of those who gave their lives in these wars, the knowledge that community members care enough to contribute toward their futures helps them to recognize that the sacrifice of their loved ones will be remembered and honored.”

Lieutenant Colonel Mark Phelan of Green Lane, PA, was a soldier in the Army Reserve's 416th Civil Affairs Battalion (CA BN) from Norristown, and served with the unit on a nine-month deployment to Mosul, Iraq in 2004. His missions involved setting up hospitals, training and equipping police and fire stations, and setting up and training Iraqi National Guard units in the north. He was killed in Mosul in October 2004.

In the spring of 2007, the Knights of Columbus held an Art Auction to raise funds in order to make the donation to the Foundation.

“The four principles upon which the Knights of Columbus was founded are charity, unity, fraternity, and patriotism,” said Jata Ghosh, Knights of Columbus Past Grand Knight. “Today, we donate this check to honor the memory of Lt. Col. Phelan and to acknowledge his sacrifice in the name of our country.”

*Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.*